

# TURKISH FAIRY TALES.

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## THE STAG-PRINCE.

ONCE upon a time, when the servants of Allah were many, there lived a Padishah<sup>1</sup> who had one son and one daughter. The Padishah grew old, his time came, and he died; his son ruled in his stead, and he had not ruled very long before he had squandered away his whole inheritance.

One day he said to his sister: "Little sister! all our money is spent. If people were to hear that we had nothing left they would drive us out of doors, and we should never be able to look our fellow-men in the face again. Far better, therefore, if we depart and take up our abode elsewhere." So they tied together the little they had left, and then the brother and sister quitted their father's palace in the night-time, and wandered forth into the wide world.

They went on and on till they came to a vast

<sup>1</sup> Emperor.



The man took the little children in his arms and carried them  
to his hut.

Page 69.

*Frontispiece*

—*Turkish Fairy Tales.*

# Turkish fairy Tales and folk Tales

Collected by DR. IGNÁCZ KUNOS

Translated from the Hungarian Version by  
R. NISBET BAIN



With Illustrations by  
CELIA LEVETUS

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## PREFACE.

THESE stories were collected from the mouths of the Turkish peasantry by the Hungarian savant Dr. Ignatius Kunos, during his travels through Anatolia,<sup>1</sup> and published for the first time in 1889 by the well-known Hungarian Literary Society, "A Kisfaludy Társaság," under the Title of *Török Népmesék* ("Turkish Folk Tales"), with an introduction by Professor Vámbéry. That distinguished Orientalist, certainly the greatest living authority on the primitive culture of the Turko-Tartaric peoples, who is as familiar with Uzbeg epics and Uiguric didactics as with the poetical masterpieces of Western Europe, is enthusiastic in his praises of these folk-tales. He compares the treasures of Turkish folk-lore to precious stones lying neglected in the by-ways of philology for want of gleaners to gather them in, and he warns the student of ethnology that when once the

<sup>1</sup> He has described his experience in the picturesque and popular *Anatóliai Képek* ("Anatolian Pictures") published at Pest in 1891.

threatened railroad actually invades the classic land of Anatolia, these naively poetical myths and legends will, infallibly, be the first victims of Western civilization.

The almost unique collection of Dr. Ignatius Kunos may therefore be regarded as a brand snatched from the burning; in any case it is an important "find," as well for the scientific folk-lorist as for the lover of fairy-tales pure and simple. That these stories should contain anything absolutely new is, indeed, too much to expect. Professor Vámbéry himself traces affinities between many of them and other purely Oriental stories which form the bases of *The Arabian Nights*. A few Slavonic and Scandinavian elements are also plainly distinguishable, such, for instance, as that mysterious fowl, the Emerald Anka, obviously no very distant relative of the Bird Mogol and the Bird Zhar, which figure in my *Russian Fairy Tales* and *Cossack Fairy Tales and Folk Tales* respectively, while the story of the *Enchanted Turban* is, in some particulars, curiously like Hans Andersen's story, *The Travelling Companion*. Nevertheless, these tales have a character peculiarly their own; above all, they are remarkable for a vivid imaginativeness, a gorgeous play of fancy, compared with which the

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imagery of the most popular fairy tales of the West seem almost prosaically jejune, and if, as Professor Vámbery suggests, these *Népmések* provide the sort of entertainment which beguiles the leisure of the Turkish ladies while they sip their mocha and whiff their fragrant narghilies, we cannot but admire the poetical taste and nice discrimination, in this respect, of the harem and the seraglio.

I have Englished these tales from the first Hungarian edition, so that this version is, perhaps, open to the objection of being a translation of a translation. Inasmuch, however, as I have followed my text very closely, and having regard to the fact that Hungarian and Turkish are closely cognate dialects (in point of grammatical construction they are practically identical), I do not think they will be found to have lost so very much of their original fragrance and flavor.

I have supplemented these purely Turkish with four semi-Turkish tales translated from the original Roumanian of Ispirescu's *Legende sau Basmele Româniloră*. Bucharest, 1892. This collection, which I commend to the notice of the Folk-Lore Society, is very curious and original, abounding as it does in extraordinarily bizarre and beautiful variants of the best-known fairy tales, a very natural

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result of the peculiar combination in Roumanian of such heterogeneous elements as Romance, Slavonic, Magyar, and Turkish.

R. NISBET BAIN.

*July, 1896.*

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